

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 8, 2005

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF REPORT ON BENCHMARK JOB ANALYSIS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY POSITIONS

ISSUE: Consideration of Report on Benchmark Job Analysis for Public Safety Positions

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Receive this report;
- (2) Concur with the following proposed change in City pay policy:

In conducting the City's Benchmark Job Analysis for public safety positions, use 100% of the average midpoint on the salary scale instead of the current 90% of the average midpoint salary as the basis of comparison with the comparator jurisdictions used by the City; and

- (3) Authorize the expenditure of the monies set aside in the FY 2006 budget and appropriated by Council on November 12, 2005, to implement public safety pay changes as outlined below.

DISCUSSION: Last spring Council set aside monies in the FY 2006 budget to address public safety pay issues and asked Mayor Euille and Councilman Smedberg to work with City staff and representatives of the three public safety departments (Police, Fire and EMS and Sheriff) to discuss pay issues and develop recommendations to address them.

We place a high value on the commitment, dedication and bravery of our public safety employees in Alexandria. Public safety pay is extremely competitive among jurisdictions in the Washington region. As the cost of housing increases in the inner jurisdictions, more employees live further away from their place of work. As the counties in the outer suburbs grow and expand their public safety departments, there is more competition for new workers as well as for experienced employees. With the rising number of City public safety employees eligible for retirement, we

need to encourage our experienced workers to stay with the City as well as to attract new employees to fill vacancies as they occur. We must stay competitive to continue to attract the most qualified workers to apply for and take jobs in Alexandria.

To address these concerns, there were a total of eight meetings held with City staff and public safety union and association representatives since August, four meetings with the Council members and four meetings with City staff. The conclusion of the group was that the benchmark pay methodology developed by the City in 1997 and used to compare City pay with our comparator jurisdictions was not addressing pay differences adequately and needed to be done more frequently.

The proposed change in our job analysis methodology ensures that City public safety pay is at 100% of the average of the midpoint of the salary scale in comparison to the five jurisdictions with which we compare our matching jobs (Arlington, Fairfax, Montgomery, Prince George's and Prince William Counties). This is a step to ensure that the City stays in the middle when comparing its public safety jobs to the other jurisdictions and does not fall behind. In addition, the public safety pay group recommends that the pay comparisons be conducted more frequently (at least every other year) and that the analysis be done after the salary adjustments in the comparator jurisdictions are known and annual budgets have been approved in those jurisdictions.

The pay change under the revised methodology (using 100% of the average of the midpoint of the salary scale) results in a majority of public safety jobs falling under 100%, which means that their pay is below the average of the midpoint salaries.

As Council is aware, in 1997 City Council decided to provide pay parity among Police officers, Firefighters and Sheriff's deputies. While the recommended pay changes continue this practice, we agreed that we would have a study of pay parity conducted, get input from those involved and present a report to the group this January and to City Council in February to determine if this should continue to be the policy of the City.

We also committed to continue to work with the group on several other pay issues that arose during our discussions such as how and at what pace employees progress along the pay scale, hourly rates of pay, shift differential and the choice of comparators for certain positions. We will develop timelines for discussion of these and other matters and work with the employees and the two council members. We recognize the City's fiscal constraints and will work on a multi-year approach to addressing these issues.

It is important to note that we need to review our benchmark analysis policy for reviewing salary competitiveness for general City employees and intend to do this over the next year.

FISCAL IMPACT: Affected public safety employees would receive an average 5.5% pay increase. The retroactive implementation of the benchmark results under the procedures described above would result in additional City costs of approximately \$3.1 million (\$2.4 million

in salary and \$0.7 million in benefits). City Council has already appropriated \$3.0 million as part of the supplemental appropriation ordinance passed on November 12, 2005 for this purpose. Those funds had been set aside last spring by City Council during the FY 2006 budget process as a designated fund balance for this purpose.

STAFF:

Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager

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